

Chapter 5. Management Area Direction

Introduction

The 1987 Prescott Land and Resource Management Plan for the Prescott National Forest included specific direction on how to manage different land areas based on ecological characteristics. In this revised Plan, we have addressed ecological variation using other methods (see chapters 1 and 2). Management area boundaries were selected based on human geographic boundaries, so that guidance in response to social or economic issues could be better identified to meet each community's needs. As Forest Plan revision steps progressed, we asked ourselves which aspects of the plan needed to be addressed differently based on geographic location. The response was that recreation needs and desires were likely to be different for various parts of the Prescott National Forest. In addition, the Verde Valley area had specific desires relative to maintaining and enhancing Open Space.

The Prescott NF was divided into human geographic areas based on descriptions of communities located near and within the national forest (Confab, 2007). Using methods developed by James Kent and Associates, geographic areas were mapped indicating where people from various communities feel strongly about conditions and events. Communities were then invited to develop community visions for the Prescott NF and other surrounding lands.

In a more recent effort to develop a recreation strategy for the Prescott NF, similar boundaries were used to divide the forest and surrounding area into three zones. In this Plan, those zone boundaries were adjusted slightly and are called geographic areas. Management areas are subdivisions of geographic areas. Geographic areas have desired conditions; however, guidelines are listed by management area. The relationship between geographic areas and management areas in this Plan is shown below:

Agua Fria/Crown King Geographic Area	Prescott/Chino/Drake Geographic Area
Agua Fria Management Area	Upper Verde Management Area
Crown King Management Area	Williamson Valley North Management Area
	Williamson Valley South Management Area
Verde Valley Geographic Area	Prescott Basin Management Area
Verde Valley Management Area	

Desired condition statements are included for each of the three geographic areas listed above. They were developed from statements taken from the community visions identified in 2006 and 2007. Only statements related to recreation or open space were included. Forestwide desired conditions (chapter 2) address community vision statements related to other topics. While the source of each community vision statement is indicated in parentheses, the statements apply to the whole geographic area. Desired conditions for each geographic area provide a wider viewpoint and may include desired community characteristics that overlap both the Prescott NF and other land ownership.

Each management area includes descriptions of desired conditions and listings of guidelines that are specific to that area of the Prescott NF. Map E in appendix A displays geographic area and management area boundaries.

Desired conditions that apply to all of the Prescott NF have been included in chapter 2 of this Plan. The desired conditions included for each geographic area and each management area are those that are specific to that land area. Forestwide desired conditions apply to these areas, as well all other areas on the Prescott NF. Geographic or management area desired conditions refine the Forestwide descriptions. Objectives developed in response to management area desired conditions have been included in chapter 3, Objectives.

Forestwide standards and guidelines are found in chapter 4 of this Plan. The management area standards and guidelines described for each management area in this chapter provide more specific guidance for each individual management area. If there appears to be a conflict between forestwide standards and guidelines and those found in management areas, the most restrictive apply.

Agua Fria /Crown King Geographic Area

Historic Context

When the Spanish arrived in Arizona, the Agua Fria River Basin was occupied primarily by the Yavapai people, although Apache people also were present. With the discovery of precious metals in the Bradshaw Mountains and the Black Hills in the 1860s, 'gold fever' hastened the migration of industrialism and capitalism to the area. Numerous mining camps and towns sprang up. In the 1920s a quarter million sheep seasonally moved through the Agua Fria watershed from the Salt River Valley to the high plateau, with many stopping at the Old Cordes Ranch for shearing. Bales of wool eventually were moved by wagon from Old Cordes to the Cleator railroad siding and then to markets.

The largest mine in the Bradshaw Mountains, and the one that gave its name to the local settlement was the Crowned King Mine. The first claim was in 1875. Years later the name was shortened to its current form, Crown King. Miners transformed the area with picks, machinery, explosives, smoke stacks, industrial chemicals, logging, and the construction of roads and railroads. The Crown King mill pounded away at ore from the mine through 1890, at one time making three tons of high-grade concentrates per day. Surrounding forests were cut down to feed the boilers that drove the mill. In the 1930s the City of Phoenix leased almost 2,000 acres of land in Horsethief Basin from the Forest Service. Through the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps programs, a dam was built to create a lake. Cabins, tennis courts, and playgrounds were constructed and used by families escaping the summer heat. After the land reverted to the National Forest, the cabins became Summer Home dwellings as part of the recreation residence program (Cliff Hersted and Cultural Resources Overview: The Prescott National Forest, 1989¹)

Special Features or Characteristics of the Agua Fria/Crown King Geographic Area

Approximate Acres: 373,000, of which 97 percent is National Forest Service land

Miles of trail limited to non-motorized uses: 101

Miles of motorized trails or multi-use trails: 126

¹ USDA Forest Service. (1989). Cultural Resources Overview: The Prescott National Forest. Report No. 89-062

Special Areas:

- Castle Creek Wilderness
- Cedar Bench Wilderness (west portion)
- Pine Mountain Wilderness
- Grapevine Botanical Area

Inventoried Roadless Areas

- Arnold Mesa Inventoried Roadless Area
- Blind Indian Creek Inventoried Roadless Area
- Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Area (west portion)
- Pine Mountain Wilderness Contiguous Inventoried Roadless Area

Developed Campgrounds and Day Use Sites:

- Powell Springs Campground
- Horsethief Basin:
 - Hazlett Hollow Campground
 - Turney Gulch Group Campground
 - Horsethief Lake Day Use

Features:

- Community of Crown King
- Historic mining
- Recreation Residences in Horse Thief Basin
- Recreational gold panning
- Towers Mountain and Horse Thief Fire Tower
- Horse Thief Basin Cabin rental
- Sycamore Creek Cabin Rental
- Multiple agency Recreation Resources border Prescott National Forest
 - Aqua Fria National Monument (BLM)
 - Tonto National Forest
 - Bureau of Land Management

Management Areas:

- Agua Fria Management Area
- Crown King Management Area

Desired Conditions for the Aqua Fria/Crown King Geographic Area

Recreational opportunities are common. Trails and signage are in good condition. Evidence of trash accumulation and illegal dumping is rarely seen. Use of trails by motorized vehicles takes place on designated roads, trails, or use areas. (from Agua Fria community vision)

As new, sustainable, efficient, non-polluting conservation practices are identified, they are incorporated into management activities. (from Agua Fria community vision)

There is equal access to services, amenities, and recreational opportunities. Developed public facilities, such as campsites and trails are adequate to accommodate visitors. (from Crown King community vision)

Forest Service roads provide safe access to local citizens and visitors. (from Crown King community vision)

Interactions and partnerships between local communities and municipal, state, and federal agencies help to move toward achieving desired conditions. (from Cherry community vision)

The rural nature and natural beauty is valued and retained. (from Black Canyon City community vision)

Agua Fria Management Area

The Agua Fria Management Area generally includes lower elevation desert grasslands, piñon-juniper woodlands and chaparral. This area includes the communities of Cordes Junction, Dugas, and Cherry. Access is provided by Highways 69, 169, or I-17 and single lane roads. Permitted livestock grazing is common and agriculture remains a way of life. Most recreational opportunities are dispersed. Horseback riding, OHV use, hunting, and hiking are common. While OHV policy restricts such use to designated roads, trails, and areas, the open areas prove to be attractive to riders who want to leave trails and roads even though it is unlawful.

Desired Conditions

Motorized use is found on designated trails and roads. Developments are few and interactions between visitors are few. Motorized and non-motorized opportunities are often separated, but may share trailhead access. Visitors and citizens make use of trails that provide their desired experiences and “unofficial” trails are not evident. The Black Canyon non-motorized Trail stretches from BLM land ownership through the Prescott NF connecting Black Canyon City to Camp Verde.

Hunting is common. OHV use and motorized access to dispersed camping remains within the legal distance from roads, especially near Yellow Jacket Creek north of the Agua Fria National Monument. Dispersed campsites are scattered along designated roads, sites are relatively small, use only minimally affects resources, and riparian corridors remain natural. Interactions between grazing permittees and recreationists are generally positive or benign including signing and other tools to communicate the need to respect gate closures for livestock and natural resources.

Objectives

All objectives, including those related to Management Area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, Objectives.

Guidelines

MA-AF-1: Management actions should focus on reducing recreation impacts to the riparian corridor along Yellow Jacket Creek.

MA-VV-2: Management actions should focus on retaining the scenic integrity objectives associated with the Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Area.

Crown King Management Area

The Bradshaw Mountains are the major feature of the Crown King Management Area. Elevation ranges from 3,000 to over 7,500 feet. Vegetation on the eastern side of the management area includes desert communities. A major recreational attraction is the cooler temperatures and the ponderosa pine at higher elevations. This area includes the communities of Cleater, Old Cordes, and Crown King. Access via Senator Highway, Forest Road 177, or County 59 can be primitive with single lane roads threading their way through switchbacks to Crown King and the Horsethief Basin Recreation Area. The major recreation attractions are trails including Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) connection to Lake Pleasant Recreation Area to the south, native surface roadways traveled by both vehicles and OHVs, and hiking or horseback riding in Castle Creek Wilderness. Developed camping opportunities are found in Horsethief Basin and dispersed camping takes place where there is enough accessible level area to camp.

Desired Conditions

Recreation information is available to visitors to Crown King; OHV visitors remain on legal, designated trails and routes, and those travelways are well-signed and maintained. Areas are generally trash free.

Forest Road 52 (Senator Highway) and Forest Road 362 provide an approximate north/south boundary through the area relative to types of recreation experiences. West of that boundary, the recreation experience is largely non-motorized with occasional OHV trails crossing from east to west. The experience is one of moderate isolation from sights and sounds of people, and the environment is predominantly unmodified. To the east of Forest Road 52, the experience is largely motorized with the exception of Castle Creek Wilderness. There is a high degree of interaction with the natural environment throughout the area. Visitor use is high nearer Crown King and Horsethief basin, especially on weekends, and interaction between visitors is common in the summer time. Within the Castle Creek Wilderness, the experience is one of non-mechanized activity with a predominantly unmodified environment. Concentration of visitors is low, and terrain and limited water availability make activities challenging.

There are several dispersed campsites near the community of Crown King that show minimal compaction and have vegetative cover at a density similar to that found in the surrounding area. Developed facilities in Horsethief Basin are well-maintained and respond to demand for use. Recreational uses provide a sustainable contribution to the local economy during summers at Crown King. Hazlett Hollow Campground allows OHV access to developed campsites. Forest Road 711, provides access from the south to Crown King, and it remains a 4-wheel drive, very high clearance vehicle route that provides extreme challenge. Recreational target shooting is not common in the Crown King area.

Palace Station historic stage stop retains its historic value, and facilities there are well-maintained. The area in and around the Grapevine Botanical Area provides a non-motorized setting for recreation. Within the Grapevine Botanical Area, Grapevine Creek and riparian areas are healthy; the watershed condition is generally good; and sensitive plant and animal species are protected. The value of the botanic area for scientific research is maintained (see map E for location). Objectives

All objectives, including those related to Management Area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, Objectives.

Guidelines

MA-CK-1: *Management actions should focus on reducing recreation impacts such as soil compaction and loss of vegetation and provide a sanitary, primitive camping experience in the vicinity of Horsethief basin and the Crown King community.*

MA-CK-2: Within the Grapevine Botanical Area:

- *No livestock grazing, trailing or driving should take place within the botanical area except that livestock may trail through the Bootlegger-Grapevine Unit on established roads to Forest Road 87A and then Trail 304. This movement should be controlled and not be accomplished by drifting.*
- *Motorized and mountain bike use should not take place on Trails 4, 304, and 9432 below the rim of Big Bug Mesa.*
- *Recreation use should be limited to day use.*

MA-CK-3: *Management actions should focus on maintaining the wilderness characteristics of the Castle Creek Contiguous recommended wilderness area until further action is initiated by the Forest Service to forward it to the Congress for designation.*

Prescott/Chino/Drake Geographic Area

Historic Context

In 1853-54, Lt. Amiel W. Whipple led a military expedition into northern Arizona and established the first access routes to nearby gold fields. After the Walker party found gold near Granite Creek and near the Hassayampa River, Arizona was organized as a separate territory and its first temporary capital was located at nearby Fort Whipple. The city of Prescott was designated the capital of the new territory of Arizona from 1865-1867 and again from 1877 to 1889. The early economy of the area centered on cattle ranching and mining. Prescott's first rodeo was held in 1888, and that annual event has continued to the present. The city places great emphasis on historic preservation, with over 600 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places.

Chino Valley, about 16 miles north of Prescott, is thought to have been named by Lt. Whipple after the curly grama grasses that were common and called "del china" by Mexicans. What is now Prescott Valley was originally called Lonesome Valley and was part of the Fain family ranch for years. In the 1960s speculators from Phoenix bought land about 7 miles east of Prescott and incorporated under the name Prescott Valley. They sold lots to those in northern areas who were looking for warmer, sunny winters. The towns of Prescott Valley, Chino Valley, and Prescott together make up an area known locally as the 'Tri-City' area with a combined population estimated at 88,000 in the 2006 census. Yavapai-Prescott Tribal lands are located next to and partially within the borders of Prescott (Prescott Chamber of Commerce, Chino Valley Chamber of Commerce, AZ Jerome, Sharlot Hall Museum, 2006 Census).

Special Features or Characteristics of the Prescott/Chino/Drake Geographic Area

Approximate Acreage is 896,000, of which 87 percent is National Forest Service land.

Miles of trail limited to non-motorized uses: 235

Miles of motorized or multi-use trails: 224

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Special Areas:

- Juniper Mesa Wilderness
- Apache Creek Wilderness
- Sycamore Canyon Wilderness
- Woodchute Wilderness
- Granite Mountain Wilderness
- Upper Verde River, eligible for Wild/Scenic River designation

Inventoried Roadless Areas:

- Ash Creek Inventoried Roadless Area
- Connell Mountains Inventoried Roadless Area
- Fritsche Inventoried Roadless Area
- Muldoon Inventoried Roadless Area
- Sheridan Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area

Developed Camping and Day Use Sites:

- Lynx Lake Recreation Area
 - Hilltop Campground
 - Lynx Lake Campgrounds
 - Lynx Lake Day Use Area and Lake access
 - Lynx Creek Ruin Day Use

- Granite Basin Recreation Area
 - Granite Group Campground
 - Cayuse Equestrian Day-Use
 - Yavapai Campground

- Thumb Butte Day Use area and trail
- Alto Pit OHV Day Use and Camping
- White Spar Campground
- Indian Creek Campground
- Groom Creek Horse Camp
- Groom Creek Schoolhouse Day Use
- Lower Wolf Creek Campground
- Upper Wolf Creek Group Campground
- Mt. Union Lookout Day Use
- Spruce Mt. Lookout Day Use

Features:

- Prescott Basin designated dispersed camping
- Flagstone quarries in the northern portion of the Management Area
- Spruce Mtn., Mt. Union, and Hyde Mtn. Fire Towers

Management Areas:

- Upper Verde Management Area
- Williamson North Management Area
- Williamson South Management Area
- Prescott Basin Management Area
- Prescribed Conditions for the Prescott/Chino/Drake Geographic Area

Recreational access for all ages and physical conditions is available. Roads, trails and signage, as well as water source access for horses is available and well maintained (from Wilhoit community vision).

There is a thoughtful balance between available access and protection of forest resources and aesthetics. A comprehensive system of meaningful and sustainable trails, trailheads and designated campsites is present. Conflicts between types of uses, are rare, especially those that take place on non-motorized and multi-use trails. All user groups, including hikers, equestrians, bicyclists, motorized vehicle operators and hunters enjoy a reasonable amount of access (from Prescott community vision).

Many portions of the geographic area retain open areas and a feeling of 'space.' Area for activities like horseback riding, hiking, and taking the dogs for walks is found throughout the geographic area and provide the feeling of openness that people enjoy (from Paulden community vision).

Upper Verde Management Area

The focus of this management area is the Upper Verde River. The Upper Verde River includes the headwaters of the Verde River, a perennial river that has continuous flow. This river is eligible for designation as a Wild and Scenic River and there has been great public interest in such designation. This area also extends south almost to the community of Cherry on the western slopes of the Black Hills. Access to the area is via State Highways 89 and 89A, and the Perkinsville Road.

Desired Conditions

Within this area, the Upper Verde River retains its outstandingly remarkable values, while recreation facilities are found in several locations along the river. These facilities provide for day use or overnight camping, make use of existing roads as access, and minimize resource impacts, including heritage resources. Most sites are found in areas where 1) the landscape is generally natural with modifications moderately evident; 2) opportunities for challenge and risk are generally moderate to low; and 3) opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized activities are present. Motorized use off designated trails is rare. Control systems, such as law enforcement activity or citizen interactions, ensure resource impacts are minimized as population and visitor use increase. A non-motorized experience is generally found in the area to the south of the river between Forest Roads 638 and 9110H and continues along the river corridor to Bear Siding. East of the Perkinsville Road, opportunities for non-motorized experiences continue along the River and connect with Sycamore Canyon Wilderness.

A variety of experiences exists elsewhere in the management area with motorized uses limited to designated roads and trails and a less developed setting found between those routes. Experiences where there is opportunity for isolation from man-made sights, sounds, and management controls can be found in the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness and Woodchute Wilderness.

North of the Upper Verde River, existing roads provide access for hunting, one of the predominant recreational activities in this area, and for driving for pleasure. Permitted firewood cutting and dispersed camping are common.

Objectives

All objectives, including those related to Management Area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, Objectives.

Guidelines

MA-UVR-1: *As recreation facilities are developed in the vicinity of the upper Verde River, developed opportunities should be placed near existing roadways to retain opportunities for isolation along the river where designated roads and motorized trails are rare.*

MA-UVR-2: *Management tools should be used to highlight appropriate trail use near the upper Verde River.*

MA-UVR-3: *Interpretive programs and enforcement activity should encourage appropriate behaviors and provide recreationists with information about the Verde River ecosystem.*

MA-UVR-4: *Management actions should focus on maintaining the wilderness characteristics of the Sycamore Canyon A, and Sycamore Canyon B recommended wilderness areas until further action is initiated by the Forest Service to forward them to the Congress for designation.*

Williamson Valley North Management Area

This management area includes checkerboard ownership in the northern half of the area, Walnut Creek that flows east and west through the area, and two wilderness areas near the western side of the area. It can be accessed by the Williamson Valley Road (County 5) and Forest Road 664. Most recreational activity is related to trail use or other dispersed activity. There are no developed campgrounds in this area.

Desired Conditions

As dispersed recreation continues in this area, the trail system is formally designated, well-maintained, and signed. The area includes a mixture of both motorized and non-motorized recreational opportunities, however non-motorized opportunities are more common. Trails with various intended uses are located so that conflicts between different uses are minimized.

More primitive experiences with few interactions between visitors, and isolation from man-made sights and sounds are found within the Apache Creek and Juniper Mountains Wilderness and the immediate area surrounding each. Hiking trails are designed to take advantage of spring locations. Trails and trailheads located along the interface between the Forest Service and other ownership efficiently and effectively provide access to the Prescott National Forest, while avoiding resource damage. Wildlife viewing opportunities are available. Impacts to wildlife and water resources, as well as recreational use conflicts are uncommon.

Objectives

All objectives, including those related to Management Area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, Objectives.

Guidelines

MA-WVN-1: *As trail facilities are developed at the interface between national forest and other ownership in the Williamson Valley North Management Area, consideration should be given to providing public access and discouraging the creation of social trails.*

MA-WVN-2: *Management tools should be used to minimize recreation impacts to wildlife species.*

MA-WVN-3: *Management actions should focus on maintaining the wilderness characteristics of the Apache Creek A, Apache Creek B, Bald Mountain, and Juniper Mesa recommended wilderness areas until further action is initiated by the Forest Service to forward them to the Congress for designation.*

Williamson Valley South Management Area

This area extends from the vicinity of Campwood Road south toward the city of Prescott and surrounds the Prescott Basin management area. It includes: Granite Mountain Wilderness, Alto Pit Off-Road Motorized Use Area, and 317 miles of trails where motorized use is allowed. It is accessed primarily via Campwood Road (County 68) in the northern part of the area and County Roads 66, and 121 on the east and south.

Desired Conditions

The predominant experiences in this management area include: a) a mixture of opportunities to affiliate with other groups or be isolated from people, b) a generally natural landscape with facilities that are moderately to readily evident, and c) the concentration of visitors varies from low in the Sheridan Mountains to high in the area that surrounds Prescott Basin. Opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized activities are present, but motorized activities are more common. Facilities that support trail systems, such as trailheads or camping are found in the vicinity of Campwood Road (County Road 68), as well as near the Prescott Basin Management Area. Visitors and citizens use designated trails or areas that provide their desired experiences and “unofficial” trails are not evident. Motorized access for dispersed camping or firewood gathering occurs near designated roads. Impacts to ecology and water resources, as well as recreational use conflicts are uncommon. The Hassayampa River and the area along Copper Basin Wash have healthy riparian characteristics, are trash free, and show little natural resource impacts due to recreational use.

Granite Mountain Wilderness provides quiet recreation in a location that is easy to access. Because this Wilderness is very near population centers, a wilderness management plan mapped desired experiences in this wilderness. They are described in the following table and map G of appendix A.

Table 1. Desired Experiences by Wilderness Opportunity Class within Granite Mountain Wilderness

Wilderness Opportunity Classes	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Human impacts	Minimal and generally not apparent to most visitors. Vegetation Impacts would recover annually.	Low; apparent to only a few visitors. Vegetation impacts would recover annually.	Moderate and apparent to a moderate number of visitors. Vegetation impacts may persist from year to year.	Generally high and readily apparent to most visitors. Vegetation impacts persist from year to year and there may be moderate loss of vegetation and soil at some sites.
Opportunity for isolation and solitude	Outstanding	High	Moderate	Little
Independence and degree of outdoor skills	Outstanding opportunity for independence; maximum degree of outdoor skills; very high potential for challenge, self-reliance and risk.	Good opportunity for independence; primitive recreation skills; high potential for challenge and risk.	Moderate opportunity for independence using primitive skills; moderate opportunity for challenge and risk.	High degree of interaction with the natural environment; low-to-moderate challenge and risk.

Wilderness Opportunity Classes	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Interparty contacts	Few or none	Few	Moderate	High much of the time
Onsite management of visitors	Minimal	Involves minimum visitor contact	Involves routine visitor contact	Involves frequent visitor contact
Presence of formal regulations	Only when other methods fail to achieve objectives.	May be necessary to achieve objectives. Signs provide minimum information necessary.	May be necessary to achieve objectives. Minimum number of signs provides information necessary.	May be necessary to achieve objectives. Signs placed to aid in distributing and dispersing use.
System trails	None	Mostly no trails; some may be present for resource protection and user safety; expect light travel.	Frequent; expect moderate use for most of use season.	Frequent; expect high traffic for the majority of the use season.
Availability of facilities	None	Only in few extreme cases for resource protection; natural materials dominate.	Moderate number for protection of resources and safety of user; natural materials dominate.	Facilities and trails may be provide resource protection and user safety; emphasize natural materials.

Objectives

All objectives, including those related to Management Area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, Objectives.

Guidelines

MA-WVS-1: Within Granite Mt. Wilderness:

- *All dogs should be on a leash.*
- *Camping should not take place within 200 feet of either side of Trail 261.*
- *Campfires should not be used.*
- *Existing fixed anchors may be maintained for rock climbing; however, new fixed anchor climbing routes should not be created. Power drills and other electro-mechanical or pneumatic devices for maintaining fixed anchors shall not be used.*

MA-WVS-2: *As recreation facilities are developed in the vicinity of Camp Wood Road (County Road 68), developed opportunities should be placed near existing roadways to retain opportunities for isolation from people in areas where designated roads and motorized trails are rare.*

Prescott Basin Management Area

Recreation within the Prescott Basin is concentrated around the city of Prescott. Residents can often drive for less than 15 minutes and enjoy the natural environment. The Prescott Basin area was first identified in 1999 and incorporated by amendment into the 1987 Plan in order to respond to needs to provide more controls on recreation use related to dispersed camping. These controls have been integrated with the direction found in this Plan.

Desired Conditions

Interaction between recreationists is common. Multiple recreation sites exist including developed campgrounds, designated dispersed camping, day use sites, an OHV off-road area, and multiple trails for both motorized and non-motorized use. In general, existing facilities remain in place. Parking is available for high-use periods including holiday weekends. Recreational target shooting does not occur due to density of visitors and recreation facilities.

While much of the recreation use tends to be concentrated around the few water bodies available, activity at other sites is moderate. Facilities are well-maintained. Occurrences of vandalism and graffiti are minimal, and if they occur, are obvious for only a short time.

Developed and designated dispersed recreation sites support both community and Prescott NF focused recreation opportunities. Designated dispersed sites are popular and provide an inviting, sanitary, more primitive, place to camp. Expansion of individual sites and evidence of overuse is minimal. Resource changes due to recreational use, such as compaction and lack of vegetation, are minimized.

There is a balance between motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. Non-motorized opportunities are expanded near existing urban populations by connecting small parcels of land that currently provide non-motorized experiences but are too small to display on the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) map C, appendix A.

Both motorized and non-motorized trail systems consist of interconnecting loops, as well as trails that connect communities or to other destinations. Visitors and citizens use designated trails or areas that provide their desired experiences, and “unofficial” trails are not evident.

Impacts to ecology and water resources, as well as recreational use conflicts are uncommon. Educational activities, such as campfire programs or naturalist tours, take place within campgrounds or in other areas where people congregate.

Objectives

All objectives, including those related to Management Area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, Objectives.

Guidelines

MA-PB-1: *Dispersed camping within the Prescott Basin Management Area should not exceed a period of 7 days within a 30 consecutive-day period.*

MA-PB-2: *Intensive recreation control systems, such as permits, temporary closures or reservation systems should be used for resource protection or to prevent recreation use conflicts.*

MA-PB-3: *Interpretive programs should focus on minimizing user conflicts, encouraging appropriate behaviors, and providing recreationists with information about natural ecosystems and the wildland-urban interface.*

Verde Valley Geographic Area

Historic Context

Inhabited 5,000 years or more ago by hunter-gatherers, the Verde Valley has long been populated. Around 800 AD, an agricultural-based culture settled and made use of irrigation to grow crops. Around 1,500 AD, the area was used by nomadic Yavapai and the Apache people, who still call the area home. As settlers from Europe and the eastern part of the U.S. migrated to the west, conflicts erupted between them and the native people. Fort Verde, originally called Fort Lincoln, was established in January 1864, by a group of volunteers from New Mexico to protect crops. Later the Fort was used by U.S. Army regulars in employing offensive operations against the Yavapai and Apaches. In 1875, acting on presidential executive order, about 1,500 Yavapai and Dilzhe'e Apache from the Rio Verde Indian Reserve were transferred to the Indian agency at San Carlos, 180 miles away. This led to a loss of many lives and loss of treaty lands promised to the Yavapai-Apache. When the Yavapai and Apache were released, only about 200 made their way back to the Verde Valley. Currently, the Yavapai-Apache have purchased lands and are a cultural and economic contributor to the area.

Many communities in the area, including Cottonwood, Camp Verde, Beaver Creek, and Cornville came about due to agricultural activity. These communities are located near the Verde River or its tributaries where fertile land, views, and green vegetation are still found. Mining has also been an important factor within the Verde Valley. The town of Jerome originated as a copper mining camp, was incorporated in 1876 and peaked in population at about 15,000 in the 1920s. Railroads were built to support the mine, including one to the smelter in Clarkdale. In 1882, the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, was completed connecting Jerome to Ash Fork. A portion of this line is now called the Verde Canyon Railroad and is a tourist attraction in Clarkdale today. Dependent on the demand for copper, Jerome's population dwindled after World War II. Its population is now about 450, and it is a thriving tourist and artist community, as well as a designated National Historic District (Verde Valley Land Use Plan, 2006; Komar and Schultz, 2007; and Socio-Economic Assessment for the Prescott National Forest, 2005).

Special Features or Characteristics of the Verde Valley Geographic Area

Approximate acreage: 141,000 of which 82 percent is land under management by the Prescott National Forest

Miles of trails limited to non-motorized uses: 58

Miles of motorized or multi-use trails: 58

Special Areas:

- Cedar Bench Wilderness (east portion)
- Woodchute Wilderness
- Verde River Wild and Scenic segments

Inventoried Roadless Areas

- Black Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area
- Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Area (east portion)

Hackberry Inventoried Roadless Area

Developed Campgrounds and Day-use sites:

- Potato Patch Campground
- Mingus Mountain Campground and Day-use
- Mingus Lake Day-use
- Playground Group Campground
- Powell Springs Campground
- Beasely Flats River Access
- Hayfield Draw OHV Day-use
- Clear Creek Day-use
- Grief Hill Day-use

Features:

- Lower and Middle Verde River
 - River access
 - Bird migration flyway
 - Unique ecology
- Multi Agency Recreation resources:
 - State Scenic road 89A
 - Jerome Historic District
 - State Parks
 - National Park Service National Monuments and sites
 - Private Recreation and Natural Resource educational resources
 - Mingus Springs Camp
 - Methodist Camp
- Historic and Prehistoric sites
 - Salt mine
 - General Crook Trail
 - Coconino NF and Red Rocks influence
 - Fort Verde
- Views of Black Hills
- Mingus Mountain Hang Gliding
- Mingus Mountain Fire Tower
- Mingus Mountain Recreation Residences

Management Areas:

- Verde Valley Management Area

Desired Conditions for the Verde Valley Geographic Area

All statements come from the Verde Valley community vision unless otherwise indicated.

Wide open spaces are free of litter and illegal uses. Prescott National Forest lands provide panoramic views. Recreationists, including: anglers, birders, hunters, hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, gun enthusiasts, river runners, hang gliders and off-highway vehicle drivers, respect and utilize the national forest in harmony with each other and the environment. A system of non-motorized multi-use trails connects communities, allow access to public lands and encourage people to improve health and vitality by exploring the outdoors. Roads, designated trails, and selected areas are managed for responsible use of off-highway vehicles, while other areas are set aside for protection or managed for non-motorized uses.

Federal, State, and County agencies work cooperatively and effectively with neighboring municipalities, groups, and individuals to protect public lands and enforce the rules that govern them.

Each community retains its own identity and character. Unincorporated residential neighborhoods, farms, and ranches are intermingled and all are buffered by Prescott NF lands that provide natural open spaces and big mountain views.

Recreational shooting takes place in designated areas and educational programs encourage safe and wise use of firearms. (from Jerome community vision)

Verde Valley Management Area

The Verde Valley Management Area includes the Prescott NF land area on the east side of the Black Hills and west of the Verde River. The communities of Camp Verde, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, and Jerome are located here.

Desired Conditions

Open Space, Visual Resources, and Land Ownership

The Black Mountain Range, featuring Mingus Mountain and the Woodchute Wilderness on the north and Squaw Peak and the Cedar Bench Wilderness to the south, forms a scenic backdrop for the entire valley. Lands within the boundaries of the Prescott NF that enhance open space, scenic, watershed, or other natural resource values are generally retained in national forest ownership or are obtained through land adjustment. As proposed land exchanges are considered, processes are open to the public and there is opportunity to provide feedback regarding the land change.

Recreation

Recreation opportunities are abundant and varied within the Verde Valley Management Area. Multiple opportunities exist for motorized and non-motorized trail use, picnicking, developed camping, hunting, and river-based activities along the Verde River. Visitors have opportunities to visit historic sites, view scenic vistas, birdwatch, and appreciate undeveloped, naturally-occurring open space between the vibrant communities of Jerome, Clarkdale, Cottonwood, and Camp Verde. Between September and April of each year, opportunities for long-term camping exist. Local user groups are well-informed about recreation opportunities and restrictions, providing helpful information to users and self-patrol of recreation activities.

Recreation use within the Verde Valley Management Area is concentrated primarily at areas along the Verde River corridor and on the top of Mingus Mountain. Designated dispersed sites at Mingus Mountain are popular and provide an inviting, sanitary, and primitive place to camp as an alternative to developed campgrounds. Evidence of over-use such as soil compaction and lack of vegetation is minimal at all recreation sites. Occurrences of vandalism and graffiti are minimized, and if they occur, are obvious for only a short time.

At Mingus Mountain, multiple recreation sites exist including developed campgrounds, designated dispersed camping, and day-use sites. Trails are well-maintained and trailheads have space to safely handle parking demand. Information on opportunities is available at obvious and convenient locations. Developed camping opportunities are fulfilling demand.

Along the Verde River, multiple recreation sites exist including developed campgrounds, designated dispersed camping, and day-use sites. Existing small parcels of National Forest land along the river

provide a non-motorized experience for visitors. River access points meet public use needs. Educational efforts provide enhanced experiences by informing people about the history and ecology of the river and the area. Recreational visitors find that recreation opportunities complement those provided by city, state, tribal, other agency, and private entities.

Wilderness areas, including Pine Mountain, Cedar Bench, and Woodchute, provide a remote experience and unique hunting opportunities involving quietness and seclusion.

Both motorized and non-motorized trail systems consist of inter-connecting loops, as well as trails that connect communities or other non-Prescott NF destinations. Motorized and non-motorized opportunities are generally separated. Visitors and citizens make use of trails that provide their desired experiences and “unofficial” trails are not evident. Trailheads efficiently provide parking and access to trails where they are most critically needed. OHV trailheads provide a relatively dust-free environment that prevents erosion.

Local residents and visitors feel safe from the hazards of recreational target shooting activity that occurs within Prescott NF boundaries.

Objectives

All objectives, including those related to Management Area desired conditions are found in chapter 3, Objectives.

Guidelines

MA-VV-1: *Management actions should focus on discouraging unsafe and inappropriate winter recreation on Mingus Mountain.*

MA-VV-2: *Recreation control systems, including but not limited to reservation systems, physical and spatial control structures, and designated dispersed sites should be used to reduce recreation impacts such as soil compaction and loss of vegetation along the crest of Mingus Mountain.*

MA-VV-3: *Within the two areas shown on map F, Prescott National Forest lands should be retained in National Forest ownership or lands should be added to National Forest ownership, as available and feasible, to enhance open space values, to provide natural resource values such as wild habitat and movement corridors, and to improve watershed integrity.*

MA-VV-4: *Management actions should focus on maintaining the wilderness characteristics of the Black Canyon recommended wilderness area until further action is initiated by the Forest Service to forward it to the Congress for designation.*

MA-VV-5: *Management actions should focus on retaining the scenic integrity objectives associated with the Grief Hill Inventoried Roadless Area.*